

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SAM-01 AID-20 COME-00

EB-11 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-03 LAB-06

SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /152 W
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O R 281821Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1858

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S RADIO-TV
SPEECH OF AUGUST 27

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING, ON THE
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OCCASION OF THE CLOSE OF HIS FIRST THREE MONTHS IN

OFFICE, DECLARED AGAIN HIS COMMITMENT TO LIBERAL REFORM IN FRANCE. HE CALLED UPON FRENCHMEN TO UNITE BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS STRUGGLE TO CONTROL INFLATION AND CORRECT THE IMBALANCE OF PAYMENTS, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT ELABORATE SPECIFIC ANTI-INFLATION AND AUSTERITY MEASURES. FINALLY, GISCARD INVITED THE HEADS OF STATE OF FRANCE'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS TO "REFLECT" ON MEANS TOWARDS REALIZING THE POLITICAL UNION OF EUROPE. FRENCH TEXT AND TRANSLATION OF THE PART OF GISCARD'S SPEECH DEALING WITH THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ARE BEING SENT TO DEPARTMENT BY SEPARATE TELEGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

1. DOMESTIC REFORM. GISCARD RESTATED HIS COMMITMENT TO LIBERAL REFORM, "TO CREATE ANOTHER SOCIETY IN THE SAME FRANCE." HE REVIEWED THE REFORMS ALREADY CARRIED OUT, INCLUDING EXTENSION OF THE VOTE TO 18-YEAR-OLDS, EXPANSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES, AND IMPROVEMENT OF STATUS OF WOMEN. GISCARD WENT ON TO ANNOUNCE FURTHER MEASURES TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE FALL SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: LIBERALIZATION OF DIVORCE AND ABORTION LAWS, A 20 PER CENT INCREASE IN OLD-AGE ASSISTANCE, AID TO THE HANDICAPPED, EXTENSION OF SOCIAL SECURITY TO ALL FRENCHMEN, AND A CAPITAL GAINS TAX. DECLARING THAT THE TIMES DEMANDED A "NEW URBANISM," GISCARD SAID THE GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE A NUMBER OF MEASURES WHICH WILL CONSTITUTE "A KIND OF CHARTER OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL FRENCHMEN." FINALLY GISCARD OBSERVED THAT THE SUDREAU COMMISSION, WHICH IS STUDYING METHODS TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS IN CORPORATE DECISION-MAKING (PARIS 18692), WOULD SOON WIND UP ITS WORK, "AND AT THE END OF THE YEAR, THE GOVERNMENT WILL DRAW ITS CONCLUSIONS."

2. INFLATION AND TRADE IMBALANCE. GISCARD WARNED THAT CONTINUED PEACEFUL AND LIBERAL CHANGE DEPENDED UPON FRANCE TACKLING THE HARD ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF CONTROLLING INFLATION AND RIGHTING THE IMBALANCE OF PAYMENTS. WITHOUT OUTLINING THE SPECIFIC MEASURES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH HE IMPLIED HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEFINED AND ARE SUFFICIENT., HE CALLED FOR WORKERS, FARMERS, CADRES AND BUSINESSMEN TO UNITE BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S STRUGGLE TO CONTROL INFLATION. HE OBSERVED THAT DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF HIS PRESIDENCY, PRICES INCREASED BY 4 PER CENT BUT WAGES WENT UP BY MORE THAN 6 PER CENT; GISCARD SAID HE HOPED THAT FRENCH UNIONS, LIKE THOSE IN GERMANY AND IN THE

UNITED STATES, WOULD DO THEIR BIT AGAINST INFLATION.
THE PRESIDENT ASKED ALL FRENCHMEN TO WORK HARD,
ELIMINATE WASTE, AND INCREASE EXPORTS IN ORDER TO
REESTABLISH A FAVORABLE TRADE BALANCE.

3. INITIATIVE TOWARDS EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNION. TWO
RECENT EVENTS, GISCARD SAID, HAVE FOCUSED ATTENTION
UPON THE NEED FOR EUROPEAN UNION. FIRST, NEITHER
THE DEPARTING NOR THE INCOMING AMERICAN PRESIDENTS
EVEN PRONOUNCED THE WORD "EUROPE" IN THEIR SPEECHES
DURING THE CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION. SECONDLY, THE
PRESENT STATE OF ORGANIZATION OF THE WORLD AND OF
EUROPE WAS IRADEQUATE TO PREVENT THE CONFLICT IN
CYPRUS, WHICH INVOLVED EUROPEAN STATES. FROM THESE
EVENTS, GISCARD WENT ON, TWO CONCLUSIONS MAY BE
DRAWN: EUROPE MUST ORGANIZE ITSELF, AND THERE CAN

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O R 281821Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1859

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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BE NO TRULY MODERN WORLD UNTIL EUROPE IS MORE THAN
A SIMPLE VOID ON THE MAP. FOR THESE REASONS, GISCARD
SAID, FRANCE MUST TAKE THE LEAD IN THE POLITICAL
ORGANIZATION OF EUROPE: "IN THE COURSE OF THE COMING
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WEEKS, FRANCE WILL PROPOSE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF
MEASURES CONCERNING THE RELAUNCHING OF THE MONETARY
AND ECONOMIC UNION OF EUROPE, BUT I ALSO PLAN TO
ADDRESS THE CHIEFS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, OUR PARTNERS AND OUR FRIENDS, TO
PROPOSE TO THEM TO REFLECT TOGETHER, DURING THE FRENCH
PRESIDENCY (OF THE EEC), ON THE TIMING AND THE
METHODS OF THE REALIZATION OF THE POLITICAL UNION OF
EUROPE."

4. PARIS PRESS REACTION. GISCARD'S PRESENT CONTROL
OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL SCENE, AND THE CHANGES HE
HAS INTRODUCED IN BOTH STYLE AND SUBSTANCE, HAVE
RARELY BEEN MORE IN EVIDENCE THAN IN THE PARIS
PRESS THIS MORNING. THE IMPACT OF GISCARD'S REFORM,
COUPLED WITH HIS, INFORMALITY,
INCISIVENESS AND FRANKNESS, HAS NOTICEABLY AFFECTED
THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH PRESS APPROACH TO POLITICAL
COMMENTARY. AS A RESULT THE PRESS FINDS ITSELF
CAUGHT IN THE SWEEP OF GISCARD'S REFORMISM AND THUS
COMPELLED TO TEMPER STEREOTYPED IDEOLOGICAL REACTIONS.
LEFT-LEANING "COMBAT" STATES FLATLY THAT GISCARD
"DREAMS OF BEING TRUDEAU OR KENNEDY AND, FOR THE FIRST
TIME SINCE GAULLISM, A CONSERVATIVE IS OFFICIALLY
SEEKING THE COLLABORATION OF THE UNIONS AND PART OF
THE FRENCH LEFT." "COMBAT" GOES ON TO NOTE THAT
DEPENDING ON WHERE ONE STANDS IN THE FRENCH POLITICAL
SPECTRUM, THIS PROPOSITION CAN BE SEEN AS DEMAGOGIC,
CLEVER OR DESPERATE, BUT THAT IT CREATES A NEW
SITUATION WHICH THE LEFT WOULD BE WRONG TO UNDER-

ESTIMATE. "COMBAT" ALSO OBSERVES THAT "GISCARD'S ACTION WILL CONSIDERABLY BOTHER THE LEFT IF IT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE IMMEDIATELY THAT THIS TIME THE FRENCH RIGHT HAS DECIDED TO BE INTELLIGENT". COMMUNIST "HUMANITE" CHARACTERIZES GISCARD'S SPEECH AS "DEMAGOGIC" AND ASSERTS THAT GISCARD HAS ONLY THROWN A FEW CRUMBS TO THE WORKERS, ALLOWING BASIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND AGRICULTURAL PRICES TO WORSEN BECAUSE TO REMEDY THEM WOULD INVOLVE LIMITING BIG CAPITAL'S PRIVILEGES. "HUMANITE" ADMITS, HOWEVER, THAT GISCARD, "IN SOME DOMAINS, HAS LIFTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRANCE TO THE LEVEL OF THE MODERN NATIONS," AS PROGRESSIVE FORCES HAVE LONG URGED. THE CONSERVATIVE "AURORE" CONGRATULATES THE PRESIDENT FOR HAVING "BEEN ABLE LAST NIGHT TO PERFECT HIS PRESIDENTIAL IMAGE." IN ITS FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL, "FIGARO" (JEAN D'ORMESSON) NOTES ADMIRINGLY THAT "SOMETHING IS MOVING AND CHANGING IN THIS OLD CONSERVATIVE COUNTRY", AND OBSERVES THAT GISCARD IS BETTING ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING A DECISIVE CHANGE IN FRANCE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CRISIS SITUATION. D'ORMESSON CONCLUDES: "ONE ENDS UP BY DREAMING, BEYOND ALL THE SKEPTICISM AND INNUMERABLE OBSTACLES, THAT SUCCESS IS POSSIBLE". THE MODERATE LEFT "QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS", UNDER THE HEADLINE "VALERY IN WONDERLAND", CHARACTERIZES GISCARD AS "A SPOILED CHILD OF POLITICS". OBSERVING CRITICALLY THAT AFTER THE CHARM AND DEXTERITY OF THE PRESIDENT'S DELIVERY HAVE DISAPPEARED, TOO MANY PRESSING QUESTIONS ON

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O R 281821Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1860

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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ECONOMIC MATTERS REMAIN WITHOUT ANSWERS, THE
QUOTIDIE GRUDGINGLY ADMITS THAT "THREE MONTHS
AFTER HIS INAUGURATION, ONE CAN ONLY NOTE THAT THE
OFFICE OF CHIEF OF STATE FITS (GISCARD) LIKE A
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GLOVE", AND THAT "IN A CERTAIN MANNER IT EVEN APPEARS
THAT HE UNDERSTANDS THE OFFICE BETTER THAN GEORGES
POMPIDOU."

5. COMMENT: GISCARD SOUGHT TO BREAK NO NEW GROUND
IN HIS AUGUST 27 ADDRESS, BUT TO STRENGTHEN HIS
CREDENTIALS AS A REFORMIST LEADER AND TO PROJECT THE
IMAGE OF A LIBERAL, EUROPEAN-ORIENTED FRANCE. THE
ONLY ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IN THE ADDRESS WAS IN THE
TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCED EUROPEAN INITIATIVE. WE
HAVE ALREADY REPORTED THAT GISCARD WOULD ENDEAVOR

TO EXERCISE EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP DURING FRANCE'S TERM AS EEC COUNCIL PRESIDENT (PARIS 16753). GISCARD'S REFERENCE TO THE CHANGE OF AMERICAN LEADERSHIP REPRESENTED NO MORE THAN A CONVENIENT PEG ON WHICH TO ANNOUNCE HIS PLANS REGARDING EUROPEAN UNION; IT DOES NOT SUGGEST A RETURN TO ANTI-AMERICAN GAULLIST RHETORIC. THE REFERENCE TO CYPRUS SERVED THE SAME PURPOSE.

BY EMPHASIZING ACCOMPLISHED AND PROPOSED REFORMS WITH WHICH FEW FRENCHMEN WOULD DISAGREE, BY CHOOSING TO LET FINANCE MINISTER FOURCADE CARRY THE BURDEN OF DEALING WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR FRANCE'S UNDERLYING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS, AND BY INDICATING HIS INTENTION TO PUSH FOR A EUROPEAN UNION, GISCARD HAS REINFORCED HIS IMAGE AS A DETERMINED AND EVEN VISIONARY LIBERAL WITH STRONG EUROPEAN LEANINGS, AND HAS DEMONSTRATED A CONSUMMATE SKILL IN LEAVING HIS POLITICAL ENEMIES WITH LITTLE TO ATTACK. THE AUGUST 27 SPEECH WAS AN ADROIT POLITICAL PERFORMANCE BUT ONE WHICH PERHAPS RESTS ON AN OVERLY OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF FRANCE'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

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